

Illinois report card project

Meeting: Steering Committee Meeting

Date: April 4, 2011

Participants: Amy Nowell (CPS), Ann Courter (UIC), Ben Boer (Advance Illinois), Dan Brown (ISBE), Dan Harris (Ounce of Prevention), Deb Strauss (PTA), Harvey Smith (IIRC), Kathy Ryg (Voices/P-20 Family & Community Outreach), Larry Frank (IEA/NEA), Marin Gjaja (BCG), Max McGee (IMSA/P20 Council), Melissa Mitchell (Fed. Of Community Schools), Michael Jacoby (IASBO), Michelle Russell (BCG), Rich Voltz (IASA), Robin Steans (AI), Shalini Unnikrishnan (BCG), Steve Pearson (Advance Illinois)

Summary of discussion:

- Steering Committee introductions and welcome
- Presentation shared on following topics – vision for report cards, project design, approach, workplan and preliminary thoughts on report card inputs.
- Steering Committee aligned on view on report cards
 - Report cards to be designed for all stakeholders, with parents being the primary focus
 - Shows trajectory to excellence, not just snapshot in time
 - Living document that evolves over time – members agreed that some metrics will be "under construction" in the report card until the metric is ready to be reported on
- Three tier pyramid logic for report card discussed and agreed to
 - One pager – steering committee agreed that trade-offs will need to be made, and that what is important to parents will take highest priority.
 - Detailed report
 - Comprehensive database for longitudinal data
- Steering committee agreed to three deliverables for the project – report card strategy, report cards and secondarily linkage to education strategy
- Proposed project plan agreed to with following suggestions
 - Utilize existing groups for focus groups where feasible – P-20 career and community readiness council, outreach committee
 - However, important to ensure focus groups are representative and not just comprised of parents that are already highly engaged
 - Group highlighted that proposed timing of focus groups during summer may not be feasible. BCG team to refine plan to reflect this
- Design principles for the report card reviewed
 - Members highlighted that longitudinal data and comparisons across schools/districts are the two principles that will be biggest departures from the current report card
 - Trend identification may be particularly difficult given the limited longitudinal data available – members agreed that "under construction" sign is appropriate where metric can only be available at a later point
- Guiding questions were discussed, and modifications suggested
 - Q1: Are students achieving quality outcomes
 - Committee members highlighted the high school focus of the current example sub-questions and suggested that this be modified.
 - Specifically, kindergarten readiness asked to be added
 - Members raised and agreed that outcomes from high school should be on both post secondary education and work readiness (ready to be productive members of society) – one member discussed that in the last several years, these two measures had converged

- Committee member suggested that outcome measures should consider broader knowledge beyond standard scores – e.g. in art, health
 - Q 2: Are students making progress toward quality outcomes?
 - Members agreed that report card should isolate "exceeding" from "meeting" to recognize meaningful differences that could be lost when these are combined
 - Overall, in progress, members highlighted that the report card (one pager or detailed) should tell the story of what the school is doing to get better – example of school improvement plans
 - Q 3: Is school/district climate conducive to enabling quality outcomes and progress?
 - Alignment that measures of engagement can have significant flaws (particular discussion around suspensions) and therefore report card should focus on capturing parent, student and teacher perceptions of engagement and satisfaction (potentially through a climate survey if feasible)
 - Q4: Is the school/district resourced to enable quality outcomes and progress
 - Discussion and then alignment that the current structure of the guiding questions (resources and "facts") as separate questions is not appropriate – examples given where attendance is an important metric to include and not simply a background "fact". Resolution that guiding question 4 to be refined to focus on the characteristics about a school that provide context to understanding outcomes and progress.
 - Resources debated as a set of measures to be included in the report card – challenges with resources highlighted include that extra-school resources (e.g. community partnerships, volunteers, in-kind donations) are difficult to include and that parents often can't use the information (e.g. spend per student) in a meaningful way. Resolution that group will further discuss whether to include any resource related metrics in the one pager
- In discussing benchmarks,
 - Clarified and agreed that benchmarks will be used to provide ideas and not as a basis of decision making
 - Aligned that IL might be ground-breaking among states given that states are generally behind in aspects, especially on the climate dimension
 - Specific ideas on metrics to be explored for next iteration for inclusion:
 - parent involvement changed to engagement
 - parent definition may need to be expanded
 - chronic absenteeism to be considered
 - School type to be added to context characteristics
 - If school awards are to be included, need to consider which awards and potentially consider creating awards that link to report cards
 - Interest in group by some members to link improvement plans to report cards
- Comparison to relevant peers accepted in principle, but group felt that the challenges of implementation will need to be considered carefully before agreeing on this. Defining peers may be too challenging overall
- Some principles for trade-offs between metrics
 - Parents should not be surprised when decision made to close a school
 - Report cards should be easy to read for all parents
 - Important to think through how report card will be rolled out, how access will be provided in the implementation plan
 - In addition, criteria for metrics should add reliability and relevance of a metric before new ones are added

Next steps

- **BCG team to refine presentation for Advisory Committee meeting**